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ABSTRACT

Contributing to society is important for both society and the person. Today it appears that some married women who are housewives are unable to develop careers, because of frequent breaks in their education and/or training due to the mobility of their spouse. A captured spouse is one who is mobile with her mate and is overshadowed in the career area by her mate. This study examined whether captivity, the inability to pursue a career because of a mobile spouse, has an effect on self-esteem. Mobility was defined as moving farther than commuting distance from one's present job within the last 5 years. The non-captive population was identified as married females with themselves as the dominant working spouse. The captive population was similar to the non-captive population except that for the captive population the husband, considered the primary wage earner, was mobile and that mobility infringed upon the wife's pursuing her career. Subject (N=86) responses to the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale showed a correlation between mobility and self-esteem and a statistically significant difference between the self-esteem means of both populations. It can be concluded that mobility had adversely affected the self-esteem of captive spouses. Satisfaction with career development had no measureable effect on the self-esteem of women already established in their choice of career field. (ABL)

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Captive Spouses and Self-Esteem

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If a person does not contribute to society does that affect his/her self-esteem? Contributing to society is important for both society and the person. In theory, Adler (1957) emphasizes that one basic need of man, a social being, is to contribute to the betterment of society. It is through contributing to human welfare that a person can express self-worth and maintain self-esteem, in other words, obtain a feeling of significance (Ferguson, 1984).

According to Branden (1969), it is through the process of productive work that a person achieves a sense of control over life, which is the precondition of being able to fully enjoy all other values. Productive work however, is a consequence and achievement of self-esteem and not its cause (Branden, 1969). On the other hand, work can provide a sense of self-esteem (Baruch, Barnette, & Rivers, 1983). Self-esteem is the confidence in one's ability to achieve values. It is the reputation that one acquires within oneself (Branden, 1969). If for some reason people are not able to make a contribution to society, it seems likely that problems will arise. These will be problems not only for the individual but also for society.

Today it appears that some married women who are housewives are unable to develop careers, because of frequent breaks in their education and/or training due to the mobility of their spouse (Dessler, 1986; Miller, 1966; Holmstrom, 1971; Poloma & Garland, 1971b; Rapoport &

Rapoport, 1971; Weissman & Paykel, 1972; Wolfe, 1972). Long (1974) indicates that not only does mobility interfere with the wife's career development, but also her initial choice of a career. In other words, she is "captive." "Captive" in the sense that the wife is not able to pursue her career because her spouse is mobile.

A captured spouse is one that is mobile with her mate and is overshadowed in the career area by her mate. This is especially noted in mobile families (Long, 1974; Lichter, 1982). "Geographically, married women are a captive labor force. Where they work is determined by where they live, which in turn is determined by where their husbands work" (Tarvis & Offir, 1977, p. 218). The military family is an example of a mobile family. Unemployment rates in March, 1986, for military wives was 10.7 percent versus 6.0 percent for civilian wives. Moreover, only 12 percent of military wives were in professional occupations compare to 16 percent of civilian wives (Dessler, 1986).

If one is not able to make a contribution to society that he/she deems necessary, then it seems possible that problems will develop for both society and the individual. Some problems that surface when an individual experiences low self-esteem are the result of frustration and stress due to unemployment (Baruch, Barnett & Rivers, 1983; Fineman, 1979). Prolonged low self-esteem and stress can lead to severe depression or suicide (Gaylen, 1979), divorce,

alcoholism (Freudenberger & North, 1985), and battering or parental abuse of the children (Gelles, 1973; Steele & Pollock, 1968). In a study by Saville, Wilkinson, O'Donnell, & Colley (1981) domestic violence had a direct correlation with unemployment. Further, if one spouse feels captive, this situation can lead to marital discord resulting in the non-captive spouse having problems at his/her place of employment (Mincer, 1978). With the increased mobility of society today, these problems may be more prevalent than imagined.

What needs to be determined first, however, is whether or not captivity has an effect on self-esteem. Does captivity, the inability to pursue a career because of a mobile spouse, have an affect on self-esteem? This study focused on the effect of captivity on self-esteem in captive and non-captive women.

Population Description

The sampling frame was considered captive or non-captive according to the following definitions: captive population was defined as married females who cannot pursue a career due to the fact that their spouse is mobile. Captivity was not self imposed because of procrastination, educational limitations, or children. The captive spouse was a married female who was mobile with her mate and was shadowed in the career area by her mate. Furthermore, mobility was defined

as moving farther than commuting distance from their present job within the last five years.

The non-captive population was identified as married females with themselves as the dominant working spouse. The non-captive population were not mobile, they did not move farther than commuting distance from the present job within the last five years. In both populations no restrictions concerning age, ethnicity, or educational background were included.

The captive population was identified with the same descriptors as the non-captive population. The distinguishing factor between the two populations was that the dominant working spouse, considered the primary wage earner was mobile and that mobility infringed upon the other spouse pursuing her career.

Population Selection

The research population was selected from four women's organizations in the Southwest. These four women's organizations were representatives of the population with variables relevant to the research. The women from two professional business organizations represented primarily the non-mobile population as identified by their response to the demographic questionnaire. The primary mobile population representatives were selected from two women's organizations from an Air Force Base.

Contact was made with the president of each organization and a time to collect data was arranged. The women members were not advised of the data collection in advance. The women's attendance at the meeting was voluntary. Each woman attending the meeting was asked to voluntarily and anonymously participate using the prepared introduction.

Measures

This study involved the use of two instruments. One was a questionnaire constructed requesting demographic information. It included questions concerning a) mobility, b) education level, c) age, d) career development status, e) gender, f) marital status, g) primary wage earner, h) ethnicity and i) present working status. This information was used to determine whether the participant was captive or non-captive.

The other instrument was the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSE), a 10 item 4 point self-report measurement of self-esteem (Rosenberg, 1965). Self-esteem was defined as the attitude of approval or disapproval toward one-self (Wylie, 1974). Participants were asked whether they strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree to each statement. Each item is scored from 1 to 4, and after summing the values of the items, the scores may range from 10 to 40. High scores reflect high self-esteem.

Data Collection Procedures

The design of this study was a post test control group design as described by Campbell and Stanley (1963).

Data were collected using a questionnaire requesting demographic information, and the self-report Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale to sample the individual's self-esteem

RESULTS

Demographic Analysis

The total number of women who participated in the study was 122. The questionnaires of 36 women were identified as unusable for this study: 21 women were single; 11 women failed to complete the questionnaire; and 4 women did not fit the captive or non-captive parameters. These women were mobile and were equal contributors in the primary wage earner category, therefore it was not discernable which spouse was captive, if either. The remaining participants, N=86, were included in the study.

The population for this study was comprised of 92% whites, 3% Hispanic and 5% all others (i.e. Malayan and American Indian.) The age categories indicated 28% of the population were between 21 and 30 years; 38% between the ages of 31 and 40; 25% between 41 and 50 years; and 9% between 51 and 60 years. The highest education level of the population was tabulated as 20% graduating from 12th grade; 67% completing 1-4+ years of college; and 13% finishing trade or technical school (Table 1).

Self-esteem Analysis

To determine whether there was a distinct difference between the mobile and non-mobile populations, the self-esteem indexes of the two groups were statistically analyzed.

In examining the group for self-esteem a comparison was made between the means of the self-esteem index of the mobile and non-mobile populations. The results showed the mean of the captive (mobile) population as 33.71 with a standard deviation of $\pm$4.37 and a standard error of $\pm$.62 (Table 2). The mean of the non-mobile population was 35.64 with a standard deviation of $\pm$3.52 and a standard error of $\pm$.66.

In comparing the mean of the mobile group plus the standard error (34.33) to the mean of the non-mobile group minus the standard error (34.98), it can be seen that the values do not overlap. In addition, the mean self-esteem values for the two groups $\pm$ the t score ($p < .10$) predicted range values do not overlap. Therefore, the two populations are distinct in regards to self-esteem to the 90% confidence level. The statistically significant difference between the means of the mobile and non-mobile populations is presumably due to the effect of mobility, either directly or indirectly.

Besides mobility the only other readily observably factor that is different between the mobile and non-mobile populations is the fact that most of the mobile participants were wives of military members. To investigate the effect of being the wife of a military member on self-esteem, the mean

of the self-esteem index for the mobile military wife was calculated and compared to the mean of the control group, the mobile non-military population. The means were: mobile military wives 33.68 with a standard error of ±.694; mobile non-military wives 33.85 with a standard error of ±.97. Since the ± standard error of the two samples as well as the means ± the t score predicted range value overlap, this indicates no significant difference in self-esteem between the two samples (Table 2). This finding adds further support to the above results which indicate that mobility adversely affects self-esteem and argues against the effect on self-esteem as the result of being married to a military member.

Mobility and Self-esteem

Mobility was statistically analyzed to examine its relationship to self-esteem.

The correlation coefficient for the effect of mobility on the self-esteem index of the total population warranted a $r = .20$, $p < .08$, df 84. Linear regression analysis of the same population shows that there is a direct causal relationship between mobility and self-esteem in that, with greater mobility there is a lowered self-esteem index.

Mobility, Self-esteem and Occupational Preference

Further sorting the population to those women in preferred occupations and examining the correlation between mobility and self-esteem the $r = .20$, $p < .20$, df = 45 (Table 3). Likewise, sorting further to women with

college/technical education and in their preferred occupation $r = .19$, $p < .20$, $df = 35$, and women with a high school education in their preferred occupation $r = .31$, $p < .20$, $df = 8$ (Table 3).

Contrasting these were the correlations of the women not in their preferred occupation. For the overall population $r = -.017$, $p > .20$, $df = 37$; for the women with a college/technical education the mobility versus self-esteem correlation was $r = -.11$ and for the high school educated $r = -.17$ (Table 4).

As can be seen from Tables 3 and 4, for those women in a preferred occupation there is a positive correlation of mobility and self-esteem whereas as mobility decreases self-esteem increases. For those women in their non-preferred occupation, there is a negative correlation suggesting that self-esteem lowers as mobility decreases.

Career Development Satisfaction and Mobility

Career development satisfaction and mobility were examined in the overall population and were found to have a $r = -.28$, $p < .02$, $df = 84$. This negative correlation and the regression analysis indicated that as mobility decreased satisfaction with career development increased.

Career Development Satisfaction, Mobility and Occupational Preference

Looking at the correlation of career development satisfaction and mobility of women in their preferred

occupation, sorted by education levels, a negative correlation was indicated for those in the college/technical level ($r = -.26$, $p < .1$, df 37), the high school level ($r = -.41$, $p < .2$, df 10), as well as for the combined education levels $r = -.32$, $p < .05$, df 47 (Table 5).

The correlation of career development satisfaction and mobility for those in a non-preferred occupation sorted by education levels indicated a slightly positive, not significant correlation at the college/technical level $r = .069$, $p > .20$, df 33; high school level of $r = .32$, $p > .20$, df 6; and the overall educational levels $r = .11$ (Table 5). These positive correlations, although not significant at the indicated df, strongly suggest that for women in non-preferred occupations, mobility does not affect their career development.

Career Development Satisfaction and Self-esteem

In examining career development satisfaction and self-esteem of the overall population a $r = .42$, $p < .001$, df 84, was indicated. Likewise, positive correlations existed between career development satisfaction and self-esteem in the mobile populations $r = .33$, $p < .01$, df 56, and non-mobile population $r = .62$, $p < .001$, df 26 (Table 6).

Career Development Satisfaction, Self-esteem and Occupational Preference

When sorted by occupation, the correlation that existed between career development satisfaction and self-esteem of

women in their preferred occupation was $r = .14$, $p > .20$, df 45 and those not in preferred occupations was $r = .378$, $p < .05$, df 37, (Table 7). The positive correlation indicates that when there exists career satisfaction there is also a high self esteem index. When there is not a satisfaction in career development, the self-esteem index is also lowered.

Preferred Occupation and Self-esteem

In the overall population a correlation exists between preferred occupation and self-esteem $r = .34$, $p < .01$, df 84 (Table 8) and further sorting of mobile and non-mobile population resulted in similar preferred occupation and self-esteem correlations of $r = .24$, $p < .07$. df 56 and $r = .47$. $p < .02$, df 26 (Table 8). These positive correlations indicate that the women in a preferred occupation more likely had a higher self-esteem than the women not in their preferred occupation.

Occupational Preference and Mobility

A correlation exists between preferred occupation and mobility $r = -.33$, $p < .01$, df 84, in the overall population as well as in the college/technical educational levels $r = -.31$, $p < .01$, df 68, and the high school educational level $r = -.42$, $p < .10$, df (Table 9).

Discussion

This research of captive and non-captive women found a correlation exists between mobility and self-esteem and there was a statistical difference between the self-esteem means of

both populations. From these findings then, with this sample it can be concluded that mobility had an affect on self-esteem in that it affected the career development of the mobile women.

Looking at the results of career development satisfaction correlation with self-esteem, it appears the more mobile a married woman is, the less her career development satisfaction. This research corroborates the research done by Holmstrom (1972), Paloma and Garland (1971a) Rapoport and Rapoport (1971), Weissman and Paykel (1972) and Wolfe (1971) that indicated some married women were not able to develop their careers because of a mobile spouse.

It was noted from the results that if a woman was employed in her preferred occupation there was not a significant correlation between career development satisfaction and self-esteem. That is, satisfaction with career development has no measurable affect on the self-esteem of these women already established in their choice of career field. One possible explanation for these results may be that a women who can remain established in a preferred occupation despite the mobile life style is satisfied to at least be afforded the opportunity to develop her career. Or it may be that this observation reflects a snapshot of those women who at this location have found employment in their chosen career field and are in various stages of development so no trend is measurable.

The results of the correlation between mobility and career development satisfaction however indicated that mobility significantly affected career development satisfaction in women with preferred occupations. On the other hand, the results suggest that mobility has little affect on career development satisfaction of women not in their preferred occupation. This trend may be because women not in their preferred occupation look forward to moving to possibly a 'better' location or starting anew with nothing significant to lose.

These results also suggested that mobility does not significantly affect self-esteem when a woman is not in a preferred occupation. Here, again, this may suggest an ambivalence about moving--- if the women do not move, they may find a preferred occupation but more than likely moving will bring new and better opportunities. When a woman is in a preferred occupation, the correlation between mobility and self-esteem suggests that moving has an affect on self-esteem.

Furthermore, mobility is negatively correlated with preferred occupation in the various educational levels as well as in the total population. This indicates that the likelihood of a woman being employed in her preferred occupation is higher among non-mobile women than among mobile women. This relationship could possibly exist because the

non-mobile women do not have interruptions in developing their preferred occupation.

Moreover, preferred employment is correlated with self-esteem indicating that a woman not in her preferred occupation is likely to have lower self-esteem than a woman in her preferred occupation regardless of whether she is mobile or non-mobile.

Upon examining the population and the variables, the most prominent characteristic that distinguishes the mobile population from the non-mobile is that the majority of mobile women are spouses of military members. The question that arises then is whether mobility affects self-esteem or is it the fact that the mobile women are spouses of military members affecting self-esteem? After comparing the means of the self-esteems of the mobile military and non-military wives, no significant difference in the means was indicated. Therefore, being a wife of a military member probably does not affect self-esteem directly.

How than does all this fit into captivity and self-esteem? Captivity occurs when a woman is unable to develop a career because of the mobility of her spouse. From the results of this study and other cited literature, career development satisfaction is correlated with self-esteem, and career development is affected by mobility. Furthermore, mobility is significantly correlated with self-esteem. While the self-esteem means of mobile women, either military or

non-military are not significantly different, the means of the self-esteem index of captive versus non-captive women are significantly different.

In summary, this study has shown that mobility adversely affects the self-esteem of a captive spouse by the criteria of intercorrelation, regression analysis and analysis of variance. These conclusions are also supported by the subordinate intercorrelation of self-esteem with career development and preferred occupation. The captive spouse's self-esteem appears to be lowered because of their inability to contribute to society in their preferred occupation because of a nomadic lifestyle.

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Table 1. Population Demographics

Demographics	n	%
Ethnicity		
White	79	92
Hispanic	3	3
Other[a]	4	5
Age Group		
21-30	24	28
31-40	33	38
41-50	21	25
51-60	8	9
Education Level		
12th grade	17	20
college	58	67
technical/trade	11	13

Note. Total population = 86.

[a] The other group was comprised of 1 Malayan and 3 American Indians.

Table 2. A Comparison of the Self-esteem Index in Mobile and Non-mobile Groups.

Group	mean	S.D.	S.E.	t-score predicted range
mobile	33.71	±4.73	±.62	±0.80*
non-mobile	35.64	±3.52	±.66	±0.87*
mobile military	33.68	±4.96	±.69	±0.90*
mobile non-military	33.85	±2.53	±.97	±1.38*

* $p < .10$

Table 3 . Intercorrelation of Mobility and Self-esteem in Women of Various Educational Levels in Preferred Occupations.

	r	df
college/technical	.19*	35
high school	.31**	8
combined educational levels	.20*	45

* $p < .20$ **$p > .20$

Table 4. Intercorrelation of Mobility and Self-esteem in Women of Various Education Levels in Non-preferred Occupations.

	r	df
college/technical	-.11*	31
high school	-.17*	4
combined education levels	-.017*	37

* $p > .20$

Table 5. Intercorrelation of Career Development Satisfaction with Mobility in Women of Various Educational Levels in Preferred Not Preferred Occupations.

	r	df
In Preferred Occupation		
college/technical	-.26**	37
high school	-.41***	10
combined educational levels	-.32*	47
Not Preferred Occupation		
college/technical	.069****	33
high school	.32****	6
combined educational levels	.11****	39

* $p < .05$ **$p < .10$ ***$p < .20$

****$p > .20$

Table 6. Career Development Satisfaction Correlated with Self-esteem in Mobile and Non-mobile Women.

	r	df
mobile	.33**	56
non-mobile	.62*	26

* $p < .001$ ** $p < .01$

Table 7. Career Development Satisfaction Correlated with Self-esteem in Preferred and Not Preferred Occupations.

	r	df
preferred occupation	.14**	45
not preferred occupation	.38*	37

* $p < .05$ **$p > .20$

Table 8. Correlation of Self-esteem Index and Preferred Occupation in Mobile and Non-mobile Women

Group	r	p≤	df
mobile	.24	.07	56
non-mobile	.47	.02	26
combined group	.34	.01	84

Table 9. Correlation of Mobility and Preferred Occupations of Women in Various Educational Levels.

	r	df
college/technical	-.31*	68
high school	-.42**	14
combined educational levels	-.33*	84

* $p < .01$ **$p < .10$